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TEOYAMICI, THE GOD OF WAR AND OF DEATH.

The circular figure at the base represents

THE GOD OF THE NETHER WORLD.



LARGE VASE OF AZTEC POTTERY.

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## THE RUINS OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

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### PART I.

VERA CRUZ, *April 30, 1880.*

A TRAVELER leaves something of himself in every country he visits. The impressions, friendships, adventures of the former time he fancies will be repeated when he revisits the same scenes. He anticipates the pleasure he will have in seizing the hand of a friend, in visiting again some particular site, in finding again some house where once he was received with graceful hospitality. He comes, but a hurricane has thrown everything out of place: that site is now waste and desert, that house a ruin, those friends are dead; time has done its work.

After an absence of twenty-two years, I hasten eagerly to grasp the hands of the friends I had left. For the one who survives, these twenty-two years are but a day. It seems as though it was but yesterday that he left the town, and he fancies that every one knows him, that every one will be rejoiced to welcome him again. But the quarter of a century which he imagines himself to have passed through unscathed has made its mark upon him as upon all.

NOTE.—M. Charnay desires it to be understood that the present narrative makes no pretension to scientific accuracy, and that all his notes are subject to revision and correction in the future. He makes this reservation, in the belief that no definitive opinion can be formed until the results of the expedition have been thoroughly weighed.—THE EDITOR.

Though he may be able to recognize one here and one there, he is himself recognized by none. Like another Rip Van Winkle, he appears to awaken from a life-long dream, to find everything around him changed.

So it was with me. I found one of my friends, the oldest of them all, and one whom I did not expect to see again. I had to give my name, for he did not recognize me, and I saw that now I was a stranger. "How is A?" I asked. "He is dead." "And B?" "Dead." There I halted, not daring to pursue my inquiries further. "What! all dead?" "They are all dead."

Such are my impressions on revisiting Vera Cruz, and to me the city is like a tomb.

Yet this little Oriental city, hid away at the farther end of the Gulf of Mexico, is in itself not unattractive. Oriental I call it, for it is of Moorish descent, and its lineage is visible in its cupolas of white, rose-color, and blue, overtopped here and there by Christian spires; in its houses painted bright red, yellow, or blue; in its flat terraces with their pyramidal ornaments. Cities are more enduring than men, and Vera Cruz has become young again, with its dwellings newly painted, its white bell-towers, its enameled cupolas, its new houses and monuments. There is a holiday air about it, and a faint Haussmann breeze has come across the Atlantic. The plaza, which, when last I saw it, was paved with angular stones, covered with filth, and cut up by muddy brooks, is now a delightful square, planted with palms and other trees, robed in verdure, and paved with marble. In the middle we see a handsome fountain, while all around it are fine *cafés*, stores, the cathedral, the municipal palace, and other structures that vie with one another in giving it a fit surrounding. In the daytime the air is cool in the plaza; in the evening long lines of promenaders and of pretty Mexican ladies fill the walks. It is like one vast greenhouse.

#### FROM VERA CRUZ TO THE CITY OF MEXICO.

*May 1, 1880.*—The train left at 11.30 p. m., and during the night we traversed one of the most picturesque portions of the route. At daybreak we reached the plateau of Orizaba, and the prospect was delightful. On all sides rose mountains tinged with the brightest colors by the rising sun. The volcano of Orizaba commanded them all with its snowy cone. We sped through coffee-plantations and vast fields of tobacco and bananas. We crossed

ravines over venturesome iron bridges, meeting a fresh surprise at every turn.

From Orizaba we ascended by an easy grade to Maltrata, and then the train drawn by two engines made ready to mount the famous Cumbres de Aculzingo. We were now in the temperate, we were soon to be in the cold zone. The route lies before us describing long *détours* and ascending heavy grades ; our two locomotives, puffing and blowing, and as it were exhausted, make their way amid the grandest scenery. In three hours we reach the plateau of the *tierra fria*.

In these three hours we made an ascent of four thousand eight hundred and ten feet, that being the difference of elevation between Orizaba, which is 4,810 feet above sea-level, and Esperanza, which is 9,620 feet. At the latter place we dined. Our route now lay over vast dusty plains like Arabian deserts. The *haciendas* were few and far between, while the stunted maize and the poor, sparse crops of wheat were evidence of the dryness of the soil. The region is deplorably bare of vegetation, but the bold lines of the mountains defining the horizon, the vastness of the plain, the peaks which here and there break its monotony, the dust-whirls seen rising on every side, give it a strange aspect, and impress upon it the character of stern desolation.

But the railway has changed the face of this plateau. We might almost say that here the railway is a foreign intruder (*s'y trouve dépayssé*) ; and it more than any other cause has made the region a solitude. We see no more the long convoys of mules that used to wend their way from Vera Cruz to Mexico, the lumbering wagons, the *arrieros* in picturesque costumes ; no longer do we hear the silver bells of the *madrinas*.\* The little huts along the roadside where the muleteers were wont to quench their thirst, and the great *corales*, or yards, in which the mules were shut up at night, have disappeared.

The railroad stretches toward the northwest, and after passing Huamantla skirts the volcano of La Malinche, leaves Puebla about twenty leagues on the left, then passing through Apizaco it enters the Llanos of Apam. There we are in the land of *pulque*, the headquarters for the production of the wine of Mexico. On all sides are plantations of *maguey* (agave), and at every station are wagons unloading casks of the liquor so much liked by the Indians.

\* Mares that went at the head of the convoys, and were followed by the mules.

This not very inviting-looking beverage in color resembles a strong decoction of orgeat and water. It is thick, viscid, stringy, and has a rather strong taste of leather. It is said to be wholesome, and one becomes accustomed to it. It is consumed in enormous quantities in Mexico.

We next come to La Palma and then to Otumba, famous for the victory won by Cortes. Finally, leaving on the right the pyramids of San Juan de Teotihuacan, we arrive in the capital.

*May 2d.*—Mexico has undergone a greater change even than Vera Cruz. The Grand Plaza, which formerly was bare of vegetation, is now a fine park with eucalyptus-trees one hundred feet in height, though planted hardly twelve years ago. Handsome houses, showing novel architectural forms, have sprung up everywhere; new quarters now occupy the place of demolished convents; pretty squares surprise the returning traveler at street-crossings, and the magnificent promenade constructed by Maximilian, and which is to be extended as far as Chapultepec, would do honor to the proudest capital.

So, too, the toilets of the ladies and the costumes of the gentlemen are changed for the better, and are now more costly, perhaps, but they have lost in picturesqueness the nearer they have approached the fashions of Europe.

*May 3d-5th.*—I have seen a good many people, and delivered some of my letters. My reception was all that could be desired. Fine promises are made, but I dread delay; besides, my *matériel* has been seized at Vera Cruz—when shall I have it? I can not begin the work of excavation till permission is granted by the Congress. I am also awaiting a permit to take casts of such specimens in the Museum as are worth the trouble. It contains a dozen handsome vases worth reproducing, also a dozen bas-reliefs and statues of which I will make casts in paper. In the courtyard of the Museum is found the statue discovered at Chichen-Itza by the unfortunate Le Plongeon, and which he has christened (no one knows why) Chac Mool, and another similar statue from the district of Tlascala, which nullifies all the historical pretensions of the Doctor. In the opinion of the learned at Mexico these two statues represent not a king but a god, and this god is the god of wine. Another very curious copy of this statue is in the Escandon garden at Tacubaya; and these three idols of one and the same god, worshiped in places so far apart, clearly establish a relationship between populations very distant from one another. I am going to make

casts of these three specimens, and I also intend to photograph them.

*May 7th, 8th.*—I have seen the President, who recognized me, for twenty-one years ago we traveled together from Tehuantepec, where he was Governor, to Tequicistlan, where we gave chase to some robbers. I explained the objects of my mission both to him and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who was present. Both were very favorably disposed, but my request will have to be laid before the Congress. I was directed to call upon the Minister of Justice and of Public Instruction, to whose department this affair specially belongs. I therefore paid my respects to Señor Ignacio Mariscal, who will take charge of my petition in the House of Representatives. He expects that the House will take my request into consideration, and pass an act granting me license to make excavations and to carry away the results, as also to take copies of the principal objects in the Museum. In case the Congress, whose session is near its end, does not grant the authorization I request, the Government will nevertheless give me a man to accompany me, and I will forthwith begin my work, depositing in some storehouse at Mexico all the objects found, and then, after Congress has given its approval, assigning to the Government its share, and taking away what shall fall to me. People show much good will, and promises are plenty, yet things seem to move very slowly.

However that may be, public opinion is, I believe, interested in my mission. My baggage is still, owing to some irregularity or other, detained at Vera Cruz.

*May 8th.*—A meeting of the Geographical Society was held to hear what I had to say, and to back my request to the House of Representatives for authorization. The Society was unanimous, and through its secretary, Altamirano, expressed its purpose to second my application to the Minister. Señor Altamirano is an Indian of pure blood from Guerrero, gifted with great talent as a speaker; he is the Danton of Mexico; a polyglot, a scholar, a politician, and a *littérateur*. By the way, the Indian race is rising to power. Everywhere in the different departments of the government you see Indians who are ministers and high functionaries. The conquerors are losing ground, and the hour of restitution comes on apace. Left to itself, Mexico would infallibly lapse back into the hands of the natives. At the meeting there were exhibited to us some unique articles of pottery found in a grave near the ruins lately discovered in the vicinity of Querétaro.

## EXCURSION TO SAN JUAN DE TEOTIHUACAN.

*May 12th.*—Teotihuacan means *City of the Gods*. In the middle of the town stand two great pyramids, on each of which formerly was a temple, dedicated the one to the sun, the other to the moon. We know not who built them, but sundry authors attribute them to the Toltecs, while others assign to them a more ancient origin. These Toltecs, by the way, have much to answer for: they are credited with the erection of all the monuments found in Mexico and in Yucatan. This assertion will be considered later; but we may say that there must be some error here, arising from the fact that the term "Toltec" is applied to every ingenious tribe that has left behind it any monumental traces of its presence. In short, Toltec means *builder, architect, engineer*.

My luggage not having come to hand, and the Congress making delays about taking up the draft of the treaty I had submitted to its consideration, I concluded to occupy my time with a preliminary visit to the ruins of Teotihuacan. These ruins are situated at a distance of thirty-one miles northwest of Mexico, on the Vera Cruz Railway. Setting out at 6 a. m., I reached the place at 7.30. From the San Juan station the eye sees hardly anything, save the grand silhouettes of the two pyramids; yet to the south, on the other side of the railway, ruins seem to stretch as far as the foot of the Matlacinga Mountains, which constitute the limit of the valley. To the north are ruins extending to the village of San Martin, distant about two miles. Hence Teotihuacan was a city upward of nine leagues, or twenty-three miles, in circumference.

At first view one can form no just idea of the grandeur of these ruins. As with ruins in general, especially when they are overturned and wrecked like those before us, one experiences a grievous disillusion when he looks at them for the first time. It is only after you have made a thorough study of them in mass and in detail that they impress you with their amazing vastness. Nowhere else in America can you, in my opinion, find a more imposing mass of ancient ruins, nor do I know of anything that can compare with this City of the Gods.

Starting from the south, near the boundary of this ancient city, I took a northerly direction under the guidance of an Indian, and we passed numerous hillocks, the remains of edifices that have fallen. They are now merely heaps of small porous stones mixed with soil, but their great number is evidence that a large population once in-

habited this site. Still continuing northward, we cross the Rio de San Juan, a little muddy stream which, in the rainy season, is a torrent carrying in its current fragments of obsidian, of which I will take away some specimens.

Since the abandonment of the ruins, this river has cut a deep gorge which separates about one third of the ruins on its south side from the remainder on the north. But, while the city flourished, the river must have worn a very different aspect from what it does now. It must have been canalized, and bridges must have connected the two portions of the city. In fact, on ascending the north bank, I found causeways constructed, like the walls of the houses, of a *tetzontli*\* concrete and covered with cement. The surface appears to have had a layer of lime, and at other points are seen traces of red paint. Strange to say, in some places we find two and three causeways superposed, the one two or three feet above the other, and one asks the reason, the purpose, of these successive causeways, on which promenaders and the citizens in general must have walked in crossing from one side of the river to the other.

If these causeways belonged to different epochs, the stratum of vegetable mold between them would indicate a very high antiquity; and in a country that is generally dry and arid, where there is little or no vegetation, and where minerals decompose very slowly, we should have to allow millions of years for the formation of the two layers. But, on examining them closely, these two or three causeways appear to be all in the same state of preservation, and to belong to the same epoch; the consequence is, that we find ourselves here face to face with a mystery, as is ever the case with these American ruins. There are plenty of erroneous assertions, and absurd or questionable theories—plenty of ridiculous traditions; but nothing that is of any real historic value.

The farther we go northward, the more do the rubbish-heaps increase in number: we walk through fields bounded by hillocks, and strewed with fragments of pottery of every hue, and with little figures of idols in every shape. These *débris* grow still more abundant as we approach the Pyramid of the Sun. The very soil seems made up of these materials, and we picked up a quantity of specimens, some of them very fine.

Soon we reached the Pyramid of the Sun, which rises abruptly from the plain like a volcanic excrescence, having no platform to support it, as have the pyramids in Yucatan. Its base is seven

\* A porous stone of volcanic origin.

hundred and sixty-one feet square, and its height two hundred and sixteen feet. It exactly faces the four cardinal points. Traces remain of four esplanades one above the other on the summit, and there is no sign of any stairways. Possibly there was originally an inclined plane.

The body of the pyramid is constructed of volcanic *débris* laid in vegetable mold; there is no sign of mortar. But the structure was coated with a cement, of which large slabs still remain in perfect condition. This coat of cement was overlaid with white stucco very highly polished, as were all the houses. At the time of the erection of these pyramids, when public monuments and private dwellings were still standing whole, and with their white walls glistening in the sun, in the midst of this splendid plain with its rim of mountains tinted blue and rose color, the whole must have presented a unique and wonderful spectacle. Surround these monuments, temples, and dwellings with gardens, and then imagine what a prospect greeted the eyes of the astonished Spaniards! Add to this that everywhere one found traces of causeways which extended across the whole city out to the distant suburbs, and you will comprehend the description given of the place by Torquemada.

"All these temples and palaces, and all these houses round about," says Torquemada, "were wholly built of white polished lime, so that on beholding them from afar one experienced no end of pleasure at the sight. The alleys, the streets, and the plazas were of colored and polished cement, and so fair were they, so cleanly and so shining, that it seemed impossible that human hands should have been able to construct them, or that human feet durst tread them."

"And so true is this, that, all exaggeration aside, my report can be believed, for, in addition to what others have certified to me, I have myself seen certain ruins that gave proof of all I have said; and amid these temples were trees and flowers, magnificent gardens, and parterres breathing fragrance, all for the service and the ornamentation of the temples."

To ascend the pyramid is a laborious undertaking, and the descent is full of peril. But, having once attained the platform, we have spread before us a grand spectacle—endless ruins round about, the entire plain, to the northeast the village of San Martin; to the south San Juan; and on the southwest Otumba, famous as the scene of Cortes's victory after his great defeat of the *noche triste*, while round about is a ring of volcanic mountains.

Leaving the pyramid to the right, we now pursued a northerly course toward the Pyramid of the Moon along a splendid broad road, over one hundred and thirty feet in width, and bordered with little stone heaps, which represent the ruins of groups of dwellings. This roadway, the surface of which is in some spots still covered with cement, was nearly four miles in length, terminating at the foot of the esplanade in front of the Pyramid of the Moon. Before reaching this terminus the road widened on both sides to the extent of about three hundred and twenty-eight feet, thus forming the two arms of a cross whereof the route we had followed was the stem, and the Pyramid of the Moon the head ; the whole forms a Greek

 *tau*  . At the angle formed by one of the arms with the stem

is found a mutilated statue of the goddess that formerly had her temple on the summit of the pyramid.

In front of the groups of houses which lined this highway, all of which stood a little off the street on raised ground, are seen, in a perfect state of preservation, the steps of stairways lying parallel to the axis of the street. On these, no doubt, the people and the numerous visitors who came to attend the public or religious ceremonies used to assemble. All this reminds us of the amphitheatres of Chichen-Itza and Uxmal, and we are disposed to give the same interpretation to them all.

This highway was, according to tradition, called by the Toltecs "the way of the dead" (*mihotli*). The Toltecs, observe, are reappearing everywhere, and if they did not found Teotihuacan they lived there. But at what period ? At a time when Fate was pursuing them, for, according to the tradition cited by Señor Mendoza, they came to this holy place to entreat the gods to avert from them the calamities which had befallen them. But it so happened that, in the midst of the dances and other ceremonies they were performing in honor of these same gods, right on this road and in the amphitheatre, there suddenly appeared a giant among the dancers, and all whom he touched straightway died. On the morrow he came again. His fingers were now long and pointed ; again he came in among the files of dancers, and so wounded them with his sharp nails that in two days there was no end of corpses. On the third day, on the top of the lofty mountain Hueitepetl, situate to the west of the pyramids, appeared a babe, white and fair to view, but which gave forth a deathly odor. Filled with terror by so many

misfortunes, and by the mortality which was decimating them, the surviving Toltecs resolved to go back to their capital, Tula or Tollan, and report to their fellow citizens the outcome of their expedition. Thereupon their priests enjoined them to quit that land for ever. Such at least is the account given by Torquemada; and Veytia, more conversant than he with the hieroglyphs and the traditions of the country, goes to a greater length in detailing the misfortunes which befell the Toltecs prior to their extinction. These myths are not difficult to interpret. According to the first-named historian, the giant represents the heavy inundations which had visited the country, laying it waste. The giant with pointed nails represents the scorching rays of the sun which destroy everything when they are not associated with the other elements of life. The beautiful white babe represents the frosts that destroyed the feeble vegetation which had survived the preceding calamities.

As for the *tau*, **T**, which is the principal figure in these ruins, and which we see repeated in the great highway, archæologists observe that all the nations of the earth have held that symbol as sacred and as full of deep mysteries. The priests kept these mysteries secret, and divulged them only to the initiates of the first degree. The symbolic sign of the *tau*, which represents a cross, with some slight differences in the forms, has existed among the most ancient nations—in Hindostan as at Palenque, in Egypt as at Teotihuacan. Other nations have one after another adopted it, but without knowing what meaning was given to it by the priests in the childhood of the human race. At Benares, Madras, and in all the ancient cities of India, the principal temples were cruciform. The famous Tenochtitlan (Mexico) was divided into four parts, forming a St. Andrew's cross, as may be seen in Plate I of the "Codex Mendoza." The symbol of the cross was known among all nations of the old as of the new continent; and, if we would know the meaning of this cross for the priests who in ancient times were the depositaries of science, we may interrogate the Egyptian hieroglyphs, and they will tell us that it was a representation of the four elements. It represented fire—the world's soul; water, which washes and cleanses, and which, according to Christian beliefs, effaces original sin; earth, the earth which bears within itself the source of every good, and which at death receives us while we await new transformations; finally, it represents the air in which we live and act.

The Pyramid of the Moon is only one hundred and fifty feet in height, and the panorama which we survey from its summit is

equally grand. Toward the north we see ruins of dwellings not visible from the platform of the other great pyramid. Authors mention twenty-seven thousand dwellings, not reckoning the temples. Teotihuacan must have been a very large city.

On the left, before you reach the foot of the esplanade fronting the Pyramid of the Moon, is seen an excavation recently made into the side of a tumulus. The entrance is narrow, and the passage difficult, and within there is nothing to be seen but stones. In front of this excavation is seen an enormous statue in the style of all Mexican statues, but it is noteworthy on account of its great size. Originally it stood on the summit of a hill, but it had been cast down, suffering serious injury to its nose in the fall. It lay prone on the ground when Maximilian ordered it to be set up again, and we found it in a position favorable for taking a good photograph. This, together with a dozen other photographs taken amid the ruins and in the neighborhood, we will carry away with us.

As for this gigantic statue, it represents one, but which one we can not say, of the divinities worshiped by the builders of the City of the Gods, the famous Teotihuacan. The idol is a trachyte block in the form of a parallelipedon, very rudely sculptured, and in all respects resembling a multitude of other gods that date from a later period. However great their talents, their ingenuity as builders, it must be confessed that the founders of this city had no artistic faculty. The block of trachyte is nearly ten and a half feet in height and nearly sixty-four inches square at the base ; its estimated weight is thirty-six thousand pounds—a rather ponderous specimen and interesting withal, but very ugly.

Now, must we charge this imperfection of their sculpture to a lack of taste ? Was it perchance some hieratic principle that maintained this style, as we find to be the case in certain other countries ? Or, was it because the people lacked the tools needed for working hard stone ? Their sculptures, some of them at least, appear to have been executed by the process of rubbing ; and surely it were difficult to attain perfection in that way, as we can well understand. But if we examine specimens of their vases or any of those little terra-cotta figures, fashioned as they were out of less refractory material, we shall find them to be true *chefs-d'œuvre*, genuine works of art. Thus in our first excavation at Teotihuacan we found some one hundred and twenty-five heads of idols or *lares*, and divers other objects, among them some perfectly modeled

masks. Further, every type is represented in this little collection, which I shall certainly duplicate on my next visit.

Among these Indian masks which appear to reproduce all the races of Mexico from infancy to old age, among these terra-cotta specimens representing truly or in caricature all the social gradations, we find two figures of exceptional interest.

One of these specimens is a negro's head with thick lips and woolly hair, all perfectly designed ; the other the face of a woman, rather disfigured by a broken nose, but plainly of European or Grecian type, and reminding us, by its features, of the Venus of Milo. This looks like a pleasantry ; but, no—my photographs will prove that I simply state facts. It must not be forgotten that we are here in the land of mysteries as regards history and race. How many races have come together here to blend into one ? Not even the most learned can give the answer. Outside of the Mexican people—I mean the Aztecs—we know nothing. And yet two men have had the audacity—the *naïveté*, perhaps, or the impudence—to pretend that they can answer the question. There are many fools who are in good faith, and such probably are the two fools now in question. But both the Abbé Brasseur and Dr. Le Plongeon have gone so far as to say that they conversed with the ancient Americans, as one might converse with a friend. No detail of their life is hidden from them. And the second, copying the first, even surpasses him in his absurdities. They have no difficulty in recalling memories eighteen thousand years old ; they decipher every monumental inscription ; they know exactly what every man did !

The Secretary of the Interior has written on the subject of Le Plongeon's discovery. He tells with what ardor M. Le Plongeon and his wife devoted themselves to their researches ; and in truth we must recognize in the traveler great sincerity and much love of science or of fame, but still more humbuggery in his mode of publishing his happy find.

The pair were at Chichen-Itza, and "one day," writes the Secretary, "certain distinguished persons from Merida paid them a visit. On seeing the archæologist, they feared his reason was soon to be dethroned, so intent was he on his meditations. Suddenly, like a flash, he started and ran straight for a certain point, and there, stamping the ground with his foot, he exclaimed, with the air of one inspired, 'Here it is !' and there was the statue !"

We proceed northward, always amid ruins, everywhere finding, as before, traces of cement-covered causeways. The fields are

bounded by walls built of *tetzontli*, the *débris* of the ruined monuments. We find other ruins representing the houses built by the first Spaniards who settled in the country after the conquest.

The new-comers imitated the original inhabitants in their mode of building. The material they employed was a conglomeration of stones and mud, which they covered with a layer of cement. In the courtyards and in these open interiors the Indians of the present day have built their cabins (*jacales*), filthy dens built of brushwood and *débris*, which one can not enter without stooping, and within which one can not stand erect. Here the Indians sleep huddled together, in summer suffocated by the heat, in winter chilled by the frosts. Their only food consists of a few black beans, seasoned with pimento and tortillas of maize. Often, very often, they assured me, even of this sort of fare they have not enough. The unfortunate head of a family has sometimes several children, and he earns two reals (twenty-five cents) per day. How is he to feed five to eight persons on that? Of their clothing I say nothing. It consists of filthy rags, which leave the body half naked, exposed to every vicissitude of the seasons.

I entered one of these cabins, and found that it contained nothing whatever in the way of furniture or utensils. The wretches sleep in a little recess on the floor of beaten earth. In some of the cabins, those of the better sort, I found one, two, and three pious images hung on spines of the maguey.

Outside, in the open air, is seen the *metate*, or stone used for grinding maize. Kneeling beside this, the wife from morning till night busies herself preparing tortillas. "Why do you not," I asked the Indians, "turn to account the walls here standing? By roofing them over you might make yourselves good houses to shelter your wives and children." "Ah, señor, we have not the timber." "But there are trees in the fields." "Ah, señor, we should have to buy them, and we have not the money." "But club together; three or four families could live in one of these big houses." Union, association, is a force of which they have no idea. They squat in wretchedness, for that is their traditional state, which they will continue from father to son till, perchance, one of them awakens the race from its morbid slumber.

#### THE SUN-STONE, OR TIZOC'S STONE.

I here give in brief the history of the famous stone commonly known as the Stone of Sacrifices, now to be seen in the courtyard of the National Museum at Mexico.

This monument was found in the plaza at Mexico, the sculptured part undermost; and, like many other stones found in the same place and at the same period, it would probably have been broken up for use in paving the plaza, had not the Canónigo Gamboa fortunately been passing that way, who put a stop to the work of destruction that had already begun, and had the monument set up in the northwest corner of the cathedral churchyard. There it remained till 1824, when it was transferred to the court of the university. To-day it stands in the middle of the courtyard of the National Museum, where it was placed in 1873 under the direction of Señor Ramon Isaac Alcarez.

This monument is not at all a stone of sacrifice, for it has neither the shape nor the size of such a stone. Its upper surface is a plane, while that of the Stone of Sacrifices was convex. For the better understanding of the difference between Tizoc's stone and the Stone of Sacrifices, we will select from among many accounts of the latter stone the one given by Father Duran, who, when writing of the festival of Huitzilopochtli, discourses as follows of the sacrifices :

"There were six priests : four to hold the feet and hands of the victim, one to hold him by the throat, and one to cut open his breast and tear out the heart, which he offered to the idol.

"The name of the first five was *Chachalmeca*, which in our language means Levite, or minister of divine things. Their office was held in the highest respect, and passed from father to son. The sixth minister, he who slew the victim, was considered and venerated as the high pontiff. His name varied according to the difference of the times and the solemnities in which he offered sacrifice, as also according to the pontifical vestments he had on when he prepared himself to discharge the functions of his supreme dignity.

"On the festival of the idol we are now speaking of, he assumed the name of *Topiltzin*. His attire consisted of a red tunic fashioned like a dalmatica, the hem adorned with green embroidery. On his head he wore a crown of green and yellow plumes, his ears were incased in gold incrusted with green gems, and in his nether lip he had a *bezote* of blue stones.

"These six sacrificers entered *embijados* and with their faces blackened ; the first five had their hair frizzed ; on their foreheads they had small disks of paper in divers colors ; they were clad in white dalmaticas embroidered with black, called *papalocuachtli*.

"They looked like very demons, and in this guise inspired the people with great awe. The high-priest held in his hand a large

stone knife, with a very broad blade and very sharp ; his colleague (the fifth priest mentioned above) carried a wooden collar, or yoke, fashioned in the shape of a serpent.

“Having come before the idol they did homage to it, and then stationed themselves in order near a convex stone, which stood in front of the recess in which the idol stood. This stone in height reached the girdle of the priests, and its upper surface was so rounded that, when the victim was laid down upon it, with his shoulders resting on the convexity, his body assumed an upward curve, and when the knife was thrust into his breast the man would burst open down the middle like a grenade.

“These butchers having taken their places, the hideousness of their aspect intensified by a circle of white painted around their mouths, the prisoners to be sacrificed were led in. The victims were required to belong to certain special nations—those of Tlascala, Calpa, Tepeaca, etc.—for the god would have no others. Attended by guards they ascended, naked and in single file, the steps of the stairway till they stood before the Stone of Sacrifice. There one after another they were seized by four priests and laid on the top of the stone, a fifth priest securing the head in the wooden collar or yoke. The chief priest then laid open the victim’s breast, and with marvelous quickness plucked out the heart, which he held out in his hand toward the sun as an offering ; then turning toward the idol, he threw the heart at its feet.

“So soon as the heart was plucked out, the other priests cast the body down the stairway. All prisoners, whether few or many, taken from certain specified nations, were sacrificed in this way.

“The victims having been slain and their bodies cast down to the base of the pyramid, they who had made them prisoners seized them, carried them off, divided them among themselves, and feasted on them with much ceremony.”

There were never less than forty or fifty prisoners sacrificed on the festival of the sun-god. The inhabitants of the towns from which these prisoners came—Tlascala, Calpa, Tepeaca, etc.—themselves kept the same festival and with the same ceremonies, sacrificing the prisoners they had taken from the Aztecs ; and, as this feast of the sun-god was observed in all the provinces, we can form some notion of the number of victims offered up throughout the entire region on this day. I have been assured that it exceeded one thousand. But on occasions of extraordinary solemnity, for instance at the consecration of the temple built by Tizoc—of which the sun-

stone was designed to be an enduring memorial—some historians assert that the number of victims did not fall short of eighty thousand, others reduce the figure to twenty thousand, an estimate that seems probable enough. However this may be, it is seen from the account given above that the sun-stone, or Tizoc's stone, can not be the Stone of Sacrifices described by Father Duran, and called *Techcatl*.

Certain historians have spoken of the sun-stone as being a *temalacatl*, or gladiator's stone, but that this is an error appears from the description given of a gladiator's stone by Sahagun.

According to him the *temalacatl* resembled a great millstone, and had a hole in the center. It was the custom to make a slave stand on this stone, and there to fight for his life. He was tied to the stone by a cord passed around his waist, so that he could not overstep the circumference. He was armed, so that he could defend himself against whoever might attack him. Such combats took place very frequently, and they attracted spectators from all the country around. A *satrap* (as Sahagun quaintly denominates him), or priest, clad in a bear-skin or a wolf-skin, was the prisoners' second; he it was who led them to the stone, secured them to it, gave them their weapons, and commiserated their lot while they were engaged in combat. When they succumbed, it was he that removed their dead bodies and plucked out their hearts.

In the opinion of Señor Antonio de Leon y Gama, the carving which adorns the edge of the sun-stone represents religious dances; but, if we accept Señor Orozco y Berra's well-reasoned and erudite views, it will appear to have a very different meaning. According to him, the fifteen groups of two personages each which adorn the circumference of the stone are designed to commemorate the victories of Tizoc over fifteen different nations. Each nation is represented by a man making submission to his conqueror, who seizes him by the hair. We give, with some abridgment, Señor Orozco y Berra's account of this stone :

“The monument we are examining,” says he, “is a cylinder of trachyte, 2.69 metres (over eight feet) in diameter, 0.84 metre (about thirty-three inches) in height, and 8.28 metres (about twenty-seven feet) in circumference. The under surface is plain and smooth; the upper surface and the circumference are covered with figures in relief.

“In the center of the upper surface of the stone there is a hole communicating with a channel that terminates at the circumfer-

ence. Gama hereupon remarks that, though the face which decorated the centre has disappeared, we see that this face was evidently destroyed, leaving in its stead a badly formed cavity at which the channel begins, penetrating through half the thickness of the figures on the stone. This channel," he adds, "is quite out of keeping with the fine sculpture through which it runs, and clearly was cut in the stone at a later period by some persons who intended to disfigure or altogether destroy all the monuments which remain to perpetuate the memory of the ancients.

"Ramirez is of the same opinion as Gama, and says that the circular cavity in the center of the stone and the channel, which, beginning at the cavity, extends into the relief of the cylindrical part, gave rise to the belief that this was indeed a sacrificial stone, and that the blood of the victim was collected in the central cavity and thence passed to the circumference through the channel. These transformations (the cavity and the channel) are simply the work of destruction.

"It is with regret that we differ from such high authorities. On examining the stone carefully, we see that the circular cavity follows with perfect exactness the circumference of the circle which bounds it. Its diameter is forty-six centimetres (about eighteen inches), its depth fifteen centimetres (six inches), the concave form plainly indicating that the intention was to represent the figure of the vessel called *xicalli*, or *jicara* (a cup).

"The channel, which is 1·12 metre long (about forty-four inches), 0·085 metre (3·3 inches) deep, and of the same dimensions throughout, terminates in parallel lines: it is like the horizontal section of a tube. From all this we infer that the cavity and the channel belong to the stone, and are of the same date as the other sculptures upon it; for if their object had been to destroy the stone, they would not have regarded the central lines nor assumed any regular form; besides, the chisel-cuts would have been made at random, without order or method.

"Besides, there is no question at all that the cavity and the channel belong to and are distinctive of the stones called *cuauhxicalli* (i. e., cups of the Knights of the Sun), of which Gama seems to have known nothing, but the existence of which we admit on very competent authority. This monument is, then, a *cuauhxicalli*, and we now purpose to define its relations to the *cuacuauhtin*, or Knights of the Sun.

"According to Father Duran, it accompanied the sun-stone

vulgarly called 'the calendar.' On this stone the Aztecs were wont to sacrifice the *messenger of the sun*, by beheading him. The blood flowed into the central cavity and was thence carried away through the canal and poured out before the chamber of the sun, and the sun, which was seated (sculptured) on the stone, gloated on this blood.

"In this *xicalli*, or *jicara* (cup), were sometimes placed the hearts of the victims, which were then called by the special title of *cuauh-nochtli* which means "eagles' figs." Hence there appears to be some ground for the name vulgarly given to this monument, namely, the Stone of Sacrifices, for it was occasionally so employed, yet, as we have shown, it was not the *techeatl* of the ordinary sacrifices, nor the *temalacatl* of the gladiators.

"But where is the effigy of the sun which was graven on the upper surface of the stone? Let us analyze the bas-reliefs. The central cavity is surrounded by halos formed of single or composite rings. The first is a single ring; the second consists of sixteen small concentric circles in pairs; the third is single and broad; the fourth single and narrow; the fifth is made up of forty narrow rings; the sixth is single; the seventh consists of forty-eight narrow rings. This last halo or ring is surmounted by four figures, like the capital letter A without the transverse line, but with the extremities bent into a spiral. These divide the outer circumference of the halos into four equal parts. Among these figures there is found an eighth ring divided into four parts, each of which contains eight cruciform figures with a small circle within the arms. Four triangular figures stand above this ring, which divide it into eight equal parts.

"In the spaces between these four triangles are eight figures in the form of double semi-ellipses—in all, sixty-four for the circumference. Finally, in the spaces between the triangular figures above these ellipses, there are eight trapezoidal figures resembling a quiver full of arrows. These have at the base one of the cruciform figures, and terminate above in four semi-elliptical figures. Two double circles flank this figure, one on each side. These figures divide the outer circumference into sixteen equal parts. The relief of the sculpture is twenty-five millimetres (nearly one inch) high.

"The first thing which strikes us is the fact that these triangular figures, trapeziums, single and double rings, cruciform figures, and semi-ellipses, all occur in fours or multiples of four. It must be observed that among the Mexicans the number four was cabalistic

and mystical. They counted four cosmogonic suns or ages of the world ; four motions of the sun, which give rise to the four seasons ; four chief divisions of the day, subdivided into eight ; and four *tolpilli* (or periods of thirteen years) in their cycle of fifty-two years.

“According to them, the sun was four times extinguished with the human race ; four times, too, mankind was restored to the earth, a single pair escaping in the four great cataclysms produced by the four elements, air, earth, water, and fire.

“The whole design undoubtedly was intended to represent the sun as the Mexican astronomers conceived of its physical constitution.

“We will now consider the bas-reliefs on the convex surface of this monument. They consist of fifteen groups, of two persons each, facing one another. What is the meaning of these groups ?

“In the hieroglyphic pictures of the Mexicans, combat, battle, and war had divers modes of expression. The natural, mimetic representation of war would be to paint a multitude of armed men fighting, the dead and wounded on the field—in short, the destructive effects of all the enginery of war as we represent them ourselves in paintings. But, probably, having found that plan very embarrassing, considered as a mode of writing, the Mexicans came at last to represent by a single figure each of the two sides. Hence, in the ‘Codex Telleriano,’ the ‘Remense,’ and the ‘Vaticano,’ and in other manuscripts, war is represented by two individuals engaged in fight. In order to avoid all obscurity, each combatant has his costume, his arms, and his ornaments ; besides, he bears the name of the population to which he belongs, or the distinctive marks of his tribe.

“In Plate I of the ‘Codex Mendoza’ we see a warrior armed and brandishing his weapons, with another warrior unarmed before him, who bows down to him in token of submission. Behind this second warrior is the name of the town he represents, and a *teocalli* in flames, with the roof falling. This latter sign, which in the ‘Codex Mendoza’ accompanies the names of all the subject provinces, is used exclusively to denote the cities taken by assault ; for it was the custom of the Mexicans to burn down and destroy the chapels of the principal *teocalli* when they took a town by force.

“In this case the picture passes from the mimetic to the allegorical painting, inasmuch as it indicates not only the battle, but

also the submission, the destruction, and the pillage of the enemy's town.

"Again, among the plates of the 'Codex Mendoza,' which refer to the conquests of the kings, one of the latter is seen with a sign inscribed in front of him, namely, a shield (*chimalli*) supported on a sheaf of arrows (*mil*) ; near by you see the symbols of subjugated nations.

"The interpretation of all this is easy. Some king has conquered such or such a population. The arrows and the shield possess the phonetic value of *yaoyotl* (war, battle). Or we may combine the significations of the two objects, and then we should read 'Mitl Chimalli,' which metaphorically would in the language of the Mexicans mean war and battles. In that case the sign would be transformed from the allegorical into the ideographical, or even into the phonetic.

"Applying this system to the groups on the sun-stone, we shall have no difficulty in admitting that they represent battles, the victor being the figure on the right holding the vanquished by the hair of the head. The vanquished one is recognized by his bent figure and his submissive attitude. The hieroglyphic sign above his head gives the name of the population to which he belongs. We can not, with Gama, suppose these groups to represent dancers ; they are victors and vanquished."

According to the "Codex Mendoza," Tizoc ascended the throne of Mexico in 1481 and died in 1486.

This Tizoc, who was the seventh Aztec king, is represented by a leg, which was his hieroglyphic name. The leg, which personifies him, is inscribed above his head. So with the figures of the vanquished : each is accompanied by a sign which gives the name of the nation which he represents. They carry in the left hand two arrows, and with the right they appear to be presenting to the victor a weapon which is nothing else than the knife that was used for the sacrifice.

The cavity in the center of this stone, which formerly received the hearts of the victims offered to the sun-god, is now used as a bath by the doves which frequent the courtyard of the Museum.

DÉSIRÉ CHARNAY.